

Birds of the Moree District

By F. C. MORSE, R.A.O.U., Moree, N.S.W.

The district of Moree is situated in the extreme N.W. boundary of N.S.W. It comprises an area of 6870 square miles.

With the exception of the eastern boundary, it is all flat country, varying from large open plains to dense forests of belar (Casuarina) and brigalow. The Gwydir River runs through the centre of the district, and after passing the town spreads out in numerous narrow channels and broad swamps, the water eventually finding its way through these into the Barwon River, 70 miles further west.



Owing to the diverse nature of the country—hills, thick forests and large swamps—bird life is varied and numerous.

My observations extend over a period of thirteen years, during which time I have noted 216 species, which number, I am sure, could be added to by working the hilly to mountainous country of the eastern boundary, but I have never had an opportunity to do this. Naturally types would exist there that do not occur on the plains. My only visit has been of a fleeting nature—a hurried run through by car.



White Egret (*Egretta alba*), nest and young.

Photo. by F. C. Morse, R.A.O.U

I am indebted to Mr. H. A. Mawhiney for notes on the breeding of several species, but of those birds enumerated two only have not come under my personal observation.

Dromiceius novæ-hollandiæ. Emu.—Plentiful, especially on the larger holdings, where they have more scope. In the prickly pear country, they are very numerous, subsisting on the fruit of this plant, which is going to be the means of protecting them for many years to come.

Alectura lathamii. Brush Turkey.—In the N. and N.E. portions of the district, where the prickly pear is extensive, these birds are very numerous, and as this same type of country embraces a large portion of Southern Queensland, their preservation is assured.

Coturnix pectoralis. Stubble Quail.—After a succession of good seasons, these birds are here in countless thousands. I don't think this is caused by a large influx from other parts, but through their own wonderful powers of propagation. The breeding season lasts from August to the end of March, each hen laying from eight to thirteen eggs, and no doubt she will bring out two or three broods in a season.

Synoicus australis. Brown Quail.—Not numerous, confining themselves more to the swamp and margins of creeks and rivers.

Turnix varia. Painted Quail.—Thinly distributed all through the lightly timbered country.

Turnix pyrrhorthorax. Red-chested Quail.—This year (1922) they are numerous on the open plains. Started breeding October, and there are still eggs to be found. Nests are always hooded over.

Turnix velox. Little Quail.—Not so plentiful as the former species; but still fairly numerous. They seem to prefer the lightly timbered land to the open plains.

Geopelia humeralis. Bar-Shouldered Dove.—Is thinly distributed through all the pine belts.

Geopelia placida. Peaceful Dove.—Not numerous except in the eastern quarter, where no doubt they are attracted by the wheat.

Geopelia cuneata. Diamond Dove.—Thinly distributed over the greater portion of the district. For its size this bird has a remarkably loud call.

Phaps chalcoptera. Bronzewing.—Thinly distributed through the western portion, but very numerous round the margins of the brigalow and belar forests, where they collect to feed on the berries of a bush known as the wild currant.

Histriophaps histrionica. Flock-Pigeon.—I have on two occasions seen a single bird. History relates that before the advent of the sheep, they at times came here in thousands. One old identity informed me that during the eighties "they were breeding in such numbers in his horse paddock that he could have filled a washing tub with the eggs."

Ocyphaps lophotes. Crested Pigeon.—Very numerous over the whole district. In the 1919 drought I began feeding a couple of pairs in the garden, and by the end of a few weeks 80 birds used to turn up every morning for breakfast.

Leucosarcia melanoleuca. Wonga-Wonga.—In the same type of country as that favoured by the Brush Turkey, these birds are still fairly plentiful.

Hypotaenidia philippensis. Buff-banded Rail.—Numerous during summer months; they appear to arrive with the Snipe during August. Breed freely in the swamps.

Perzana fluminea. Spotted Crake.—In 1917 I found a single egg of this species; but until the present year was unable to find another. However, in October, my boys and I found three nests in one day. The birds are not easily flushed, so are seldom seen; but are probably more numerous than one would suppose.

Perzana plumbea. Spotless Crake.—During one of our camps on the watercourse, Mr. Mawhiney secured a specimen of this bird, but that is the only one I have seen.

Perzana pusilla. Baillon's Crake.—Plentiful, breeding from September to February.

Tribonyx ventralis. Black-tailed Water-Hen.—Common. One pair nested in a kerosene box placed near a tree.

Gallinula tenebrosa. Black Moor-Hen.—Very numerous; breeding freely during spring months.

Porphyrio melanotus. Bald Coot.—Very numerous in the vicinity of the high sags and tall rushes. Nests and eggs are very similar to previous bird.

Fulica atra. Coot.—Very numerous where there are open spaces of water; breeds freely during spring months.

Podiceps ruficollis. Black-throated Grebe.—Plentiful in all quiet waters. During the spring of 1921, several nested in a small lagoon close to my house, and it was here I first witnessed the old birds carrying the young under their wings, which they continue to do for the first fortnight.

Podiceps poliocephalus. Hoary-headed Grebe.—Not numerous; there are certain lagoons where a few pairs are generally to be found. Breeds during summer months.

Podiceps cristatus. Great Crested Grebe.—Rare, and up to the present I have been unable to find a nest, though I know they breed here, as on one occasion while fishing in a large quiet lagoon, an old bird swam out of the high reeds opposite me followed by three young.

Chlidonias leucopareia. Whiskered Tern.—These graceful little birds can often be seen flitting and skimming over the surface of the large lagoons, no doubt breeding in some quiet spot.

Erythrogonys cinctus. Red-kneed Dottrel.—Plentiful round the margins of the lagoons, preferring the still to running water, nesting freely on small muddy islands. They do not, as has been previously stated, coat their eggs with mud as a protection.

Lobibyx novæ-hollandiæ. Spur-winged Plover.—Numerous.

Zonifer tricolor. Black-breasted Plover.—Numerous, prefers the more open and barer ground of a drier nature than that favoured by the Spurwing.

Charadrius melanops. Black-fronted Dottrel.—Numerous.

Peltehyas australis. Australian Dottrel.—I have only seen a single living bird of this species, and that was during the drought of 1919. Mr. Mawhiney often reports them from his quarter, but he tells me he only sees them on one little gravelly plain.

Himantopus leucocephalus. White-headed Stilt.—Plentiful about the swamps, where they breed in colonies.

Recurvirostra novæ-hollandiæ. Red-necked Avocet.—Rare visitor. I have, on two or three occasions, seen a pair of these birds during droughts, each time they have been wandering about in the swamps caused by the overflow of artesian bores.



Upper—White-necked Heron (*Notophox pacifica*) on nest.

Lower—Black-throated Grebe (*Podiceps ruficollis*) standing on floating nest.

Photos. by F. C. Morse, R.A.O.U.

Glottis nebularius. Greenshank.—A shy and rare visitor; it is hard to approach, and when it rises it usually circles high overhead, all the time uttering a loud call.

Pisobia acuminata. Sharp-tailed Stint.—Numerous during the summer months round the margins of lagoons and swamps.

Gallinago hardwicki. Australian Snipe.—Very numerous from August to March. Large bags are often secured by sportsmen along the watercourse. I know of three guns accounting for one hundred and fifty birds in one day.

Rostratula australis. Painted Snipe.—Thinly distributed through the swamps and marshes, choosing the quiet places for breeding purposes. In the heat of summer can often be found in some shady nook a hundred yards or more from water.

Garecla maldivarum. Oriental Pratincole.—In March, 1920, while driving in the north-east quarter of the district, I flushed a small band of five Pratincoles from the roadside. In this same quarter Mr. Mawhiney often sees them, and at all times of the year, so the probability is they breed there.

Burhinus grallarius. Southern Stone-Curlew.—The wail of the Curlew can still occasionally be heard, but the intervals between are becoming longer and the birds rarer and rarer. This can be attributed to the fox, to which this bird falls an easy prey.

Eupodotis australis. Australian Bustard.—Like the previous bird, is becoming scarcer and scarcer; but the fox is not the only reason for this; the advent of the motor car has sounded the death knell of the old turkey. A bird so timid that one can seldom approach within a hundred yards of it on foot or horseback; will permit itself almost to be run over by a motor car full of men and bristling with guns.

Antigone rubicunda. Broiga (Australian Crane).—Numerous, but also suffering from the depredations of the fox. In drought time they go to the prickly pear country, and subsist on the fruit.

Threskiornis molucca. White Ibis.—Very numerous; breeding in many parts of the watercourse, either among the sags or on polygonum bushes, and recently we found them nesting in numbers in the koobah trees twelve or fifteen feet from the ground.

Threskiornis spinicollis. Straw-necked Ibis.—Very numerous. There are several large rookeries along the watercourse, where many thousands nest on the polygonum bushes. Breeding lasts from October to January if the water continues running.

Platalea regia. Black-billed Spoonbill.—Numerous. Nests in company with Cormorants or Ibis; if with the former, chooses the highest branches of the tall gum trees; if with the latter, is quite satisfied to make a nest on a polygonum bush three or four feet above the water.

Platalea flavipes. Yellow-billed Spoonbill.—Not as numerous as the previous species; but like its relative, is satisfied to take a lowly or elevated position for nesting, according to the habits of the other birds it is in company with, which are more often Pacific Herons and Cormorants than any other species.

Xenorhynchus asiaticus. Jabiru.—This bird has been twice recorded, and although I did not see it personally, there can be no doubt as to its identity by description. The last record was during the past winter, when one was seen on the McIntyre River during a flood.

Notophoxyx novæ-hollandiæ. White-fronted Heron.—Very numerous. During the present season they started building in July and continued till December.

Notophox pacifica. White-necked Heron.—Very numerous. I know of one very large heronry that I have visited on several occasions, where some hundreds of birds breed annually.

Nycticorax caledonicus. Nankeen Night-Heron.—Very numerous. Several large heronies exist, where the birds breed in great numbers.

Dupetor flavicollis. Yellow-necked Mangrove-Bittern.—I once saw a single specimen of this species fly from some tree roots overhanging the water; the action of flight caused such a commotion among the small birds, many of which gave chase, that I conclude the bird was quite foreign to them.

Betaurus poiciloptilus. Australian Bittern.—When camped at one of our favourite spots near the sags, the boom of the Bitterns could be heard from all quarters in the direction of the swamp, but, try as we would, we could not flush a single bird, and, in my many rambles in this quarter, I have seen only one.

Chenopsis atrata. Black Swan.—Numerous. Breeding from July till September.

Anseranas semipalmata. Pied Goose.—Not numerous; breeds in the densest parts of the sags during August and September.

Chenonetta jubata. Maned Goose.—Numerous; usual breeding months July and August.

Dendrocygna javanica. Whistling Duck.—At times very plentiful. This bird is known locally as the "red whistler"—a good descriptive name, which can be more appreciated when the two species are seen together.

Dendrocygna eytoni. Plumed Whistling Duck.—Very numerous in spring and summer. Nests are often found out on the plains a mile or two miles from water. Usually breeds in October, but I have just heard of a nest of seventeen eggs found in January.

Anas superciliosa. Grey (Black) Duck.—Very numerous; in favourable seasons breeds for nine months out of the twelve, either in trees or on the ground, sometimes fully a mile from water.

Virago gibberifrons. Grey Teal.—The most numerous of all the family. I have never found a nest anywhere but in hollow spouts. They breed for fully nine months, and lay as many as seventeen eggs, twelve to fifteen being a common occurrence.

Virago castanea. Chestnut-breasted Teal.—An occasional visitor in small numbers.

Spatula rhynchotis. Blue-winged Shoveller.—Never in large flocks, but thinly distributed all over the district. Nests close to the swamps in long grass or herbage.

Malacorhynchus membranaceus. Pink-eared Duck.—On occasions large flocks of these are to be found. They favour the quiet backwaters and lagoons, where they nest in all sorts of places; shallow hollows, tops of stumps and forked limbs are equally favoured. The eggs are always enveloped in down. Eight eggs seem to be the maximum clutch.

Stictonetta naevosa. Freckled Duck.—An occasional visitor. At a battue in aid of the Red Cross which I attended, two of these birds were bagged, and among the twelve shooters present (all old residents of the district) one only had seen the Ducks before. On our last trip to the Glossy Ibis rookery (February 19th, 1922), we saw a flock of about 20 of these and secured four specimens, one of which was undoubtedly an immature bird.



Upper—Black-tailed Water-Hen (*Tribonyx ventralis*) approaching nest in box.

Lower—Pink-eared Duck (*Malacorhynchus membranaceus*) on nest in tree-stump.

Photos. by F. C. Morse, R.A.O.U.

Nyroca australis. White-eyed Duck.—Very numerous; always builds a nest in a tussock of reeds or grass in the water; often makes use of a Coot's or Moor-Hen's nest.

Biziura lobata. Musk Duck.—Plentiful in the larger reaches of water. The power of flight of this bird is sometimes doubted. Some years ago I happened to be sitting on the verandah with others in the moonlight, when a large body banged on the roof and rolled down the iron into a flower bed below; where we all had a good inspection of the culprit—an old Musk Duck.

Phalacrocorax carbo. Cormorant.—Fairly plentiful. Nests in rookeries with other species, but always selects the highest positions.

Phalacrocorax ater. Little Black Cormorant.—Very numerous; breeds freely in large rookeries.

Phalacrocorax varius. Pied Cormorant.—Not numerous. I have never yet found their nests.

Microcarbo melanoleucus. Little Pied Cormorant.—Very numerous. Large rookeries at many places on The Watercourse.

Anhinga novæ-hollandiæ. Australian Darter.—Not numerous; but their cackle can be heard at all the larger lagoons. I have never found them nesting in colonies. Sometimes half a dozen nests can be located within a hundred yards of one another, but many birds are quite solitary in their habits.

Pelecanus conspicillatus. Australian Pelican.—Numerous; has an unpleasant habit of swallowing young Ducks or anything else that comes within reach.

Circus assimilis. Spotted Harrier.—Rare; odd pairs arrive during flush seasons when Quail are plentiful. Quite recently one appeared, the first we have seen for four years. This bird should not be called a Swamp Hawk; he is always to be found working the open plains. I have never seen him near the swamps.

Circus approximans. Swamp-Harrier.—A true Swamp Hawk; always to be found working to and fro over the sags, but I have never seen one away from the watercourse.

Astur fasciatus. Australian Goshawk.—Rare; seldom to be found away from the rivers, where it seems to favour the tall timber, in which it nests.

Uroæetus audax. Wedge-tailed Eagle.—Plentiful throughout the district.

Hieraetus pennatus. Little Eagle.—Rare; a few birds are occasionally to be found where rabbits are plentiful.

Haliastur sphenurus. Whistling Eagle.—Very numerous on all the rivers and watercourses. They appear to be quite friendly with the other birds, often nesting in the same tree or in close proximity to the heronies.

Lophoictinia isura. Square-tailed Kite.—I have seen an odd pair or an occasional bird of this species, but they do not remain here for long.

Gypoictinia melanosterna. Black-breasted Buzzard.—During the 1919 drought a pair of these birds remained about here for some months, causing much consternation among the Magpies, which were nesting at the time.

Elanus axillaris. Black-shouldered Kite.—At odd times I have seen a good many of these birds scattered through the district, but only when field mice are plentiful.

Falco peregrinus. Peregrine Falcon.—Fortunately for the Ducks this slaughterer does not often appear here. I have seen only three, two of which were amusing themselves Duck killing. I recorded in "The Emu" some years ago the fact that Mr. Mawhiney and myself witnessed a single bird kill, apparently only for sport, twelve Ducks in about half an hour.

Falco hypoleucus. Grey Falcon.—A rare visitor. The only time I have seen them was seven years ago, when I came across a little band of five amusing themselves chasing Pigeons.

Falco subniger. Black Falcon.—When the Quail are plentiful, a fair number of these birds come to the district. I have only two records of their breeding here. Mr. Mawhiney has twice taken eggs from the same tree, which was probably the same bird on each occasion.

Falco longipennis. Little Falcon.—Thinly distributed all over the district. Quite recently I saw one attempt to catch a Black-breasted Plover, but was very surprised to note that the Plover, owing to its wonderful dodging, got right away.

Ieracidea berigora. Brown Hawk.—Numerous. The sneak-thief among the Hawk tribe. Have several times seen one stealing young birds from the nests, more especially young Grallinas.

Ieracidea occidentalis. Striped Brown Hawk.—I often see birds which are apparently referable to this race in company with the former kind.

Cerchneis cenchroides. Nankeen Kestrel.—Numerous. Nests in hollows or just as readily in an old nest of a Raven or Magpie.

Ninox boobook. Boobook Owl.—Rare. I do not remember ever having seen one, but can occasionally hear them.

Ninox connivens. Winking Owl.—Rare. Last winter one took up his quarters close to the house in a bilga tree, his retreat being disclosed by the leg of a chicken found lying beneath; and on the following evening he made another attempt at a poultry supper. So very reluctantly, and acting on instructions from a higher authority, I brought the gun into use.

Tyto alba. Barn-Owl.—After a succession of good seasons, there is usually a plague of mice, at which times these Owls are numerous. Although seldom seen in daylight, numbers are flushed from the roadside when one is motoring at night. Their screech is distinctly disagreeable, and, if heard in large cities, the police force would be searching for murderers.

Trichoglossus moluccanus. Blue Mountain Lorikeet.—A rare visitor; occasionally a little band can be seen feeding on the blossoms of the Moreton Bay ash.

Trichoglossus chlorolepidotus. Scaly-breasted Lorikeet.—I have one record in my note book of a visit paid by a small band of these in 1917, and like the previous birds they were feeding on the blossom of the Moreton Bay ash.

Glossopsitta concinna. Musk Lorikeet.—Plentiful at times in the eastern quarter, when one of their natural foods is in abundance—the native apple tree (*Angophora*) blossom.

Cacatua galerita. White Cockatoo.—Fairly numerous in spring along the Gwydir and Barwon rivers, where they nest in the big trees.

Cacatua roseicapilla. Galah.—Very plentiful through all the district.

Leptolophus hollandicus. Cockatiel.—In good seasons in countless numbers.

Aprosmictus erythropterus. Red-winged Parrot.—Fairly well distributed throughout the district. Their food is principally the seeds of various trees, such as the leopard, white wood and prickly acacia.

Platyercus adscitus. Pale-headed Rosella.—Not numerous; more often found among the big gums of the rivers.

Platyercus eximius splendens. Yellow-mantled Rosella.—During the winter and early spring a few of these birds are to be found, but they always leave before summer sets in, and take up their quarters in the eastern parts of the district, where wheat is grown.

Barnardius barnardi. Ring-necked Parrot.—Thinly distributed all over the district.

Psephotus hæmatogaster. Blue-bonnet Parrot.—Plentiful.

Psephotus varius. Many-coloured Parrot.—In 1918, I came across several pairs of these birds along the Barwon River. I don't know whether they are permanent residents or not, as I have had no further opportunity of investigating, but it is the only time and place I have seen them.

Psephotus hæmatonotus. Red-backed Parrot.—Not numerous in the western quarter, but plentiful in the wheat growing area.

Melopsittacus undulatus. Budgerygah.—Countless numbers of these pretty little birds are here in some seasons.

Podargus strigoides. Tawny Frogmouth.—Plentiful, but not often seen.

Egotheles cristata. Owlet Nightjar.—Plentiful, but, like the previous bird, not often seen.

Eurystomus orientalis. Australian Roller.—A few pairs migrate annually to the large trees of the river bank to breed.

Dacelo gigas. Kookaburra.—Numerous.

Haleyon pyrrhopygius. Red-backed Kingfisher.—Not numerous. Seldom seen away from the rivers, where they tunnel in the banks for nesting purposes.

Haleyon sanctus. Sacred Kingfisher.—Plentiful from October to March, after which they all go away.

Merops ornatus. Rainbow Bee-eater.—For the past five years we have made a note of the arrival of these birds, and during that time the first was seen between the 22nd and 25th September; never earlier or later.

A dozen pairs or so remain close to the house to breed each year, but the wily fox has added the young to his menu, and except those actually nesting in the garden, all fall victim to this omnivorous feeder. He gets them in the same manner as he does young rabbits by simply digging a perpendicular hole to the nest. No effort is wasted in following the burrow from the entrance.

Eurostopodus guttatus. Spotted Night-jar.—On rare occasions I have flushed one of these birds. I fancy they are birds of passage, as they disappear entirely.

Chaetura caudacuta. Spine-tailed Swift.—Often noted passing usually the herald of stormy weather.

Micropus pacificus. White-rumped Swift.—During the summer months large flocks often seen passing.

Cuculus pallidus. Pallid Cuckoo.—Plentiful; a few birds remain here all the winter.

Cacomantis flabelliformis. Fantail Cuckoo.—During the winter, I have seen numbers of these in the large Casuarina forests; no doubt many hibernate here. They disappear in summer, and I have no record of an egg being found.

Mesocalius osculans. Black-eared Cuckoo.—Rare; odd pairs occasionally seen.

Chalcites basalis. Narrow-billed Bronze Cuckoo.—Very numerous.

Lamprocoeyx plagosus. Bronze-Cuckoo.—Not plentiful, and, like the Fantail, does not remain here to breed.

Scythrops novae-hollandiae. Channelbill.—Only seen occasionally, sometimes at intervals of years; but I do not think any pass without advertising themselves by their loud call.

Hirundo neoxena. Welcome Swallow.—Plentiful.

Cheramceca leucosternum. White-backed Swallow.—Until the last decade this bird was unknown in the district, now they are permanent residents in the extreme eastern quarter.

Hylochelidon nigricans. Tree-Martin.—Very numerous; occasionally makes use of a little mud to plaster up the mouth of a large hollow, in which they are nesting. A pair also built quite a respectable mud nest this year in my hayshed, a thing I did not think they were capable of.

Hylochelidon ariel. Fairy Martin.—Very numerous.

Microeca fascians. Brown Flycatcher.—Numerous.

Petroica multicolor. Scarlet-breasted Robin.—Rare in brigalow and belar of N.E.

Petroica goodenovii. Red-capped Robin.—Numerous.

Melanodryas cucullata. Hooded Robin.—Rare in brigalow and belar of N.E.

Smicrornis brevirostris. Short-billed Tree-tit.—Rare in brigalow and belar of N.E.

Gerygone albogularis. Bush-Warbler.—Rare.

Gerygone (?).—There is a more common species here than the previous one, but I am not sure of its identity yet; it certainly is not the Southern Bush-Warbler (*G. fusca*).

Eopsaltria australis. Yellow-breasted Shrike-Robin.—Plentiful in the belar and brigalow forests.

Falcunculus frontatus. Shrike-tit.—Fairly plentiful along the rivers and watercourses.

Oreoica gutturalis. Crested Bell-Bird.—Numerous in parts of the district.

Pachycephala pectoralis. Yellow-breasted Whistler.—Not numerous. Only to be found in the densest belar forests.

Pachycephala rufiventris. Rufous-breasted Whistler.—Very plentiful all through the district.

Rhipidura flabellifera. White-shafted Fantail.—Numbers of these little birds pass here in August, a few remaining to nest in the large belar forests.

Rhipidura rufifrons. Rufous Fantail.—Very rare. I cannot recall ever seeing more than two of these little birds, though Mr. Mawhiney reports them occasionally from his quarter, but he has been unable to find them nesting.



Apostle-Bird (*Struthioda cinerea*) on nest; see page 36.

Photo. by F. C. Morse, R.A.O.U.

Rhipidura leucophrys. Black and White Fantail.—Very numerous. Last spring there were no less than nine nests (all being used) within 100 yards of the house.

Seisura inquieta. Restless Flycatcher.—Plentiful; more especially near the water.

Myiagra rubecula. Leaden Flycatcher.—Very rare, but few pairs remain in the district to breed each summer, though they do not appear until the weather is hot.

Pteropodocys maxima. Ground Cuckoo-Shrike.—Fairly plentiful. Nesting commences in August and lasts till October, seldom later.

Graucalus novæ-hollandiæ. Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike.—Numerous. These birds are late breeders, not beginning till October; but nests can often be found as late as January.

Graucalus mentalis. Little Cuckoo-Shrike.—Fairly numerous along the rivers, but seldom seen elsewhere.

Campephaga tricolor. White-shouldered Caterpillar-eater. — Numerous in the late spring and summer; some birds remain here all through the winter, though the majority go north. Several returned soldiers have told me that the note of the male is just like a burst of machine gun fire. Why not call him the Machine Gunner?

Pomatostomus temporalis. Grey-crowned Babbler.—Very numerous throughout the district.

Pomatostomus superciliosus. White-browed Babbler.—Very rare. I have never seen these birds in the district, but since I started writing this, Mr. Mawhiney rang me up to say he had just found them breeding. This is also the first record he has of them.

Cinclorhamphus cruralis. Brown Song-Lark.—Numerous. The flight of the male bird of this species is more like the aerial movements of an aeroplane than that of any other bird I know of. Prefers the open plains.

Cinclorhamphus mathewsi. Rufous Song-Lark.—Numerous; but prefers the lightly timbered country; more especially large ring-barked timber.

Epthianura albifrons. White-fronted Bush-Chat.—On occasions, and at certain favoured spots, these little birds are to be found, but they are not numerous.

Epthianura tricolor. Crimson Bush-Chat.—Not numerous, and, like the former bird, favouring certain localities, preferably the tall thistles, where they breed.

Epthianura aurifrons. Orange Bush-Chat.—My first sight of these pretty little birds in the district was on the return trip from R.A.O.U. camp at Wallis Lake. When driving home from Garah, two flew from the roadside. Subsequently I saw numbers of them, and Mr. Mawhiney found them breeding in the prickly acacia bushes on the plains.

Acrocephalus australis. Australian Reed-Warbler.—Very numerous along "The Watercourse," where the abundance of sags and tall reeds is all they desire. Many can be found in the mid-winter in this favoured place.

Megalurus gramineus. Little Grass-Bird.—Numerous, especially in the swamps, where the polygonum bushes grow.

Chthonicola sagittata. Speckled Warbler.—In the more heavily timbered lands in the N.E. we saw a fair number of "specks" on one of our excursions. Black-eared Cuckoos were also more numerous there than elsewhere, but we could find no "specks'" nests, consequently no Cuckoo's eggs.

Acanthiza nana. Little Tit-Warbler.—Fairly plentiful in the sandal-wood scrubs.

Acanthiza chrysorrhoa. Yellow-tailed Tit-Warbler.—Numerous.

Acanthiza pyrrhopygia. Red-rumped Tit-Warbler.—Rare. This little bird, owing to its quiet, retiring nature and modest appearance, could easily be mistaken for several other species, and in this way overlooked, but its nest is quite unique, and usually in an exposed position—a distinct invitation to the Bronze-Cuckoo.

Acanthiza uropygialis. Chestnut-tailed Tit-Warbler.—Plentiful; generally to be found in little bands; always nests in a hollow with a tiny entrance.

Sericornis frontalis. White-browed Scrub-Wren.—On the extreme eastern boundary, where there are shaded gullies running from the hills, I have seen little bands of these birds, but farther west they do not care to go.

Malurus cyaneus. Blue Wren-Warbler.—Not numerous, but fairly well distributed.

Malurus leuconotus. White-winged Wren-Warbler.—This beautiful little bird is to be found in small companies all over the open plains, more especially where there are roly poley bushes, in which they build their nests.

Malurus lamberti. Variegated Wren-Warbler.—Fairly plentiful.

Artamus leucorhynchus. White-breasted Wood-Swallow.—Numerous.

Artamus superciliosus. White-browed Wood-Swallow.—Numerous.

Artamus personatus. Masked Wood-Swallow.—Numerous.

Artamus cinereus. Black-faced Wood-Swallow.—Numerous.

Artamus minor. Little Wood-Swallow.—Rare. A few pairs of these little birds distribute themselves over the district each spring; they seem to prefer the ring-barked belar country, where they nest in some hollow spout. This district must be about their "furthest south"; 80 miles N.W. they are plentiful.

Colluricincla harmonica. Harmonious Shrike-Thrush.—Plentiful.

Grallina cyanoleuca. Magpie Lark.—Plentiful.

Aphelocephala leucopsis. Whiteface.—Plentiful; one of the earliest and latest breeders. I have found nests early in July and as late as March.

Neositta chrysoptera. Orange-winged Nuthatch (Tree-runner).—Numerous in the belar forests.

Climacteris picumna. Brown Tree-Creeper.—Plentiful in the open forest country; begins nesting as early as June.

Climacteris leucophaea. White-throated Tree-Creeper.—Thinly distributed in the belar forests. I have never seen them elsewhere.

Climacteris erythrops. Red-browed Tree-Creeper.—Very rare; an odd pair in the N.E. quarter. In 1920, Mr. Mawhiney found one pair breeding; the nest was fairly low in the cleft of a boonary tree.

Zosterops lateralis. White-eye.—In the autumn months I have several times seen little bands of these birds about, but they do not seem to remain long, and I have never seen or heard of their nesting in the district.

Dicaeum hirundinaceum. Mistletoe-Bird.—Not numerous.



White-winged Choughs (*Corcorax melanorhamphus*), nest and young; see page 36.

Photo. by F. C. Morse, R.A.O.U.

Pardalotus assimilis. Orange-tipped Diamond-Bird (Pardalote).—Numerous. Dr. D'Ombraïn described this bird in *The Emu* of July, 1921. The note is always chip-chip.

Pardalotus striatus. Red-tipped Pardalote.—Not numerous, but to be found along the rivers in eastern extremes. Their note is quite distinct from that of the previous species; it sounds like wit-e-chu.

Pardalotus punctatus. Spotted Pardalote.—Rare. On rare occasions I have seen these little birds. Their note is also quite distinct from those of the previous two.

Melithreptus gularis. Black-chinned Honey-eater.—Rare. The only spot I have seen them in any numbers was along the McIntyre River.

Melithreptus brevirostris. Brown-headed Honey-eater.—Not numerous, but being such unobtrusive little birds, may be more plentiful than one supposes. They move about in little bands from one blossoming tree to another, and the only note uttered is a very tiny one when in flight.

Plectorhyncha lanceolata. Striped Honey-eater.—Plentiful.

Myzomela nigra. Black Honey-eater.—In the spring of 1918 numbers of these little birds appeared, remaining for about a month, feeding the while on honey from the sandalwood (*Eremophila mitchelli*). That short visit is the only time I have ever come in contact with them.

Grantiella picta. Painted Honey-eater.—At times fairly plentiful in certain parts of the district, but I think their movements are influenced by the fruiting of the mistletoe, on which they seem entirely to feed. Mr. Mawhiney and E. Rickman found several of their fragile nests in the belar and myall trees in 1920. This year none are about, and there is likewise no fruit on the mistletoe.

Stigmatops indistincta. Brown Honey-eater.—The identity of this bird is doubtful. In a little gully full of flowering banksia, we (that is, Dr. D'Ombraïn, myself and others) saw a pair of small brown Honey-eaters with long, curved bills. I thought they were of this species; the Dr. says not. They were building a nest at the time, and as we were returning by the place a fortnight later, we decided to make further investigation then; but when we did return, the trees had ceased flowering, and the birds had gone. Whatever they were, they had no right there.

Meliphaga fusca. Fuscous Honey-eater.—Where the hills give way to the plains at the extreme eastern boundary the Fuscous Honey-eater is to be found, but the flat country marks his boundary line.

Meliphaga virescens. Singing Honey-eater.—Plentiful. Their increase is checked very much by the Pallid Cuckoo, which is very partial to their nest. They overcome this difficulty in a measure by nesting continuously from September to March.

Meliphaga penicillata. White-plumed Honey-eater.—The most plentiful of all. Numerous throughout the district.

Myzantha garrula. Noisy Miner.—Plentiful.

Myzantha flavigula. Yellow-throated Miner.—I think even more plentiful than the previous species.

Acanthagenys rufogularis. Spiny-checked Wattle-bird.—Numerous.

Entomyzon cyanotis. Blue-faced Honey-eater.—Not numerous.

Philemon corniculatus. Friar-Bird.—Fairly numerous along the rivers, but scarce elsewhere.

Philemon citreogularis. Yellow-throated Friar-Bird.—Numerous in the spring and summer, but disappears entirely during the colder months.

Anthus australis. Australian Pipit.—Not numerous.

Mirafrja javanica. Horsfield Bush-Lark.—Numerous on the open plains when the seasons are good.

Zonæginthus guttatus. Spotted-sided Finch.—Like all the representatives of the Finch family, only here in good seasons. At present very plentiful.

Tæniopygia castanotis. Chestnut-eared Finch.—At times in thousands, making their nests in low hollows or prickly acacia bushes.

Steganopleura bichenovii. Banded Finch.—Rare.

Aidemosyne modesta. Plum-headed Finch.—At present very plentiful. Nesting in the black thistles and roly poly bushes.

Ægitha temporalis. Red-browed Finch.—Only extends to the eastern boundary of the district among the hills.

Oriolus sagittatus. Australian Oriole.—Not numerous; prefers the belar forests.

Chlamydera maculata. Spotted Bower-Bird.—Owing to this interesting bird's destructive habits in the gardens, they are not nearly so plentiful as formerly, except in the prickly pear country, the fruit of which plant keeps them out of mischief elsewhere.

Corvus bennetti. Short-billed Crow.—An occasional visitor, whose presence can always be detected by the very different "caw" from that of the Ravens.

Corvus coronoides. Raven.—Plentiful. In spite of guns, traps, and other means of destruction, the old Ravens, I am glad to state, seem as plentiful as ever.

Struthidea cinerea. Grey Jumper.—Plentiful. The most homely bird we have, and generally looked on as a garden pest. The society often take possession of a *Grallina*'s nest for their own purposes.

Corcorax melanorhamphus. White-winged Cough.—In times when mud for building purposes is scarce, they often overcome the difficulty by using soft cattle droppings.

Strepera graculina. Pied Bell-Magpie.—Plentiful in the prickly pear country, no doubt attracted there by the fruit.

Cracticus nigrogularis. Black-throated Butcher-Bird.—Numerous. I always think the note of this bird is the most beautiful of all our songsters, but it is heard to advantage only at daybreak in the spring.

Cracticus torquatus. Collared Butcher-Bird.—Numerous.

Gymnorhina tibicen. Black-backed Magpie.—Numerous.

In this list I have omitted two species, both migrants, of whose identity I am not certain, but they were probably a Whimbrel and a Sanderling.

Egret and Glossy Ibis Rookeries

By F. C. MORSE, R.A.O.U., Coocalla, Garah, N.S.W.

For many years I have been firmly convinced that the Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) bred somewhere along the 70 miles of Watercourse in this district, and, in company with Mr. H. A. Mawhiney, I have spent many days in search of their nests.



Glossy Ibis, nest and eggs.

Photo. by F. C. Morse, R.A.O.U.